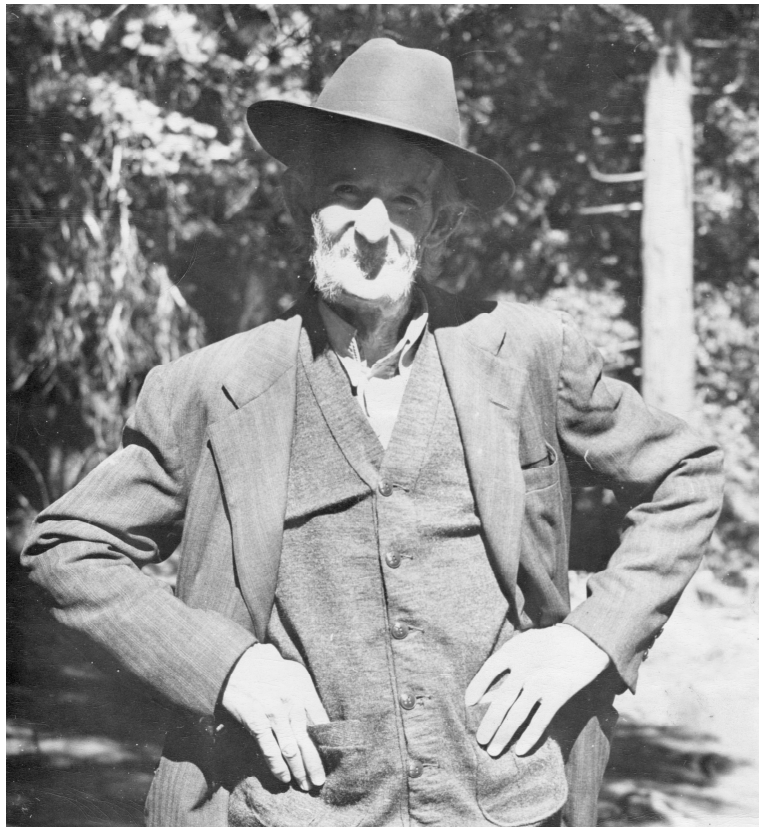


## **Friend Donaldson, Yellow Jackets!**

### **Robert Haley Asher**



**Robert Haley Asher, September 9, 1945**

Robert Haley Asher was born 28 March 1868, to Josephus Marion Asher, who was the first commercial nurseryman in the San Diego area, providing buyers with fruit trees, shrubs, & vines from his Fruit Vale ranch in Paradise Valley, National City. Robert Asher settled on Palomar Mountain in 1903, and ultimately had 160 acres, living in the Pauma Creek / State Park area. Robert Asher also lived off Palomar Mountain part of the year working as a nurseryman among other things. On Palomar, Asher photographed summer campers, then developed and sold them photos; he also sold postcards off his photos, trapped animals for pelts, collected and sold wild plants, picked apples, and worked odd jobs. Asher moved off Palomar Mountain in 1946 to his sister Mrs. Josephine A. Vacher's place on Fuerte Drive in El Cajon and continued to visit Palomar Mountain until 1951. Asher passed away on 25 April 1953.

These digitized pages are from the Robert Haley Asher papers (held by Peter Brueggeman). When Josephine Vacher's son vacated the family house in El Cajon, the family gave Robert Asher materials at that location to Peter, due to his Palomar Mountain history interests. Digitization of these materials and posting them to the Internet Archive is intended to enhance and preserve access to these materials.

Yellow jacket wasp encounter while plant collecting for Carl Purdy near Idyllwild with Donaldson, August-September 1903



1. Friendly Donaldson.  
fellow jackets! By Robert H. Asher

Donaldson and I finally found a few  
scattered plants of <sup>another</sup> the *Calochortus* we  
wanted at the head of a little draw. Only  
a few however - not enough to bother with.  
But there was a ~~narrow~~<sup>way</sup> path down the  
draw about 10 feet wide, free from  
brush, so we decided to prospect down  
the drawing hoping to locate more prom-  
ising digging. And we did just that - a little  
flat on the south side of the draw just  
jammed with the *Calochortus* blossoms.  
It was about 40 feet square clear of brush,  
shaded by a pine tree and several oaks.  
The plants were so thick that we decided to  
"mine" the bulbs instead of digging them out  
one by one. To mine the bulbs, one would dig up  
a clod of earth from below the level of the  
bulbs, then breaking up the clod by hand and  
carefully removing the bulbs with ones fingers.  
When Donaldson didn't seem pleased when I  
first suggested that we each mark out a  
mining claim, but he quickly agreed to the  
plan and I started digging out a fine



north and south through the middle of the 140-foot square. I had dug out a little trench about 6 feet when the pick opened up a tiny lake of a perfectly clear golden-yellow substance. It looked like honey, but bees don't extract their honey that way, and there were no bees around. But there were several yellow jackets. But we both rejected the idea of yellow-jacket honey. We finally decided that the yellow substance was pitch from a root of the pine tree. But there ~~was~~ must have been fully half a pint of the pitch - but how come? I finished working out the center of the patch and then turned to Donaldson. "You can take the part to the right of the line and I'll take that to the left." Donaldson didn't answer and just looked glum. "Well, you take to the left and I'll take the right side half." "No" muttered Donaldson, "I'll take the right side." So that was that and I thrust the point of the pick into the nearest part of my side. Then another and another. By that time there were dozens of yellow jackets flying about. Another stroke of the pick and I suddenly realized that I had inadvertently destroyed the yellow jackets nest and that the whole lot were after me in



3.

dead earnest, ~~throwing~~ dropping the pick & made a mad dash for the high brush on the opposite side of the road, waving my little white canvas hat wildly around my face and neck. Luckily, they seemed to be more interested in the white cap than my face in neck. After dodging around in the tall brush for a while I came to rest behind a high rock. Here I had a chance to catch my breath, but not for long - the yellow boys were after me again. But I did finally lose the last yellow jacket as I ventured into the draw some distance below our salocharter claims. I could hear the steady "plunk! plunk! plunk!" of Donaldson's pick, so I called out to him. "All clear here!" he answered, so I returned to mining my claim, and not a yellow jacket in sight. Cal Purdy was down to Los Angeles some years after and he wrote me that Donaldson was still laughing over the way the yellow jackets chased Asher into the brush.